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ABSTRACT

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military gave the press unprecedented freedom of access to combat zones. This allowed newspaper reporters, photographers, and television crews to document a war involving U.S. sons and daughters on the other side of the world. This willingness to allow war documentation also was extended to the military's own photographers. While these military photographers may have been there to document the different operations of the war, their photographs also tell a story about the young men and women who fulfilled their duty to their country by serving in the Vietnam War. This lesson uses 13 photographs taken by military photographers to present images of many aspects of the Vietnam War. The lesson relates to Article I, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution granting Congress powers to raise and support armies, make rules for the government, regulate land and naval forces. It correlates to the National History Standards and to the National Standards for Civics and Government. The lesson provides historical background (with five resources); and suggests diverse teaching activities for classroom implementation, including photograph analysis, research and present, and creative writing. Photographs are appended. (BT)

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National Archives and Records Administration

THE CONSTITUTION COMMUNITY

Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)

The War in Vietnam: A Story in Photographs

By Linda Darus Clark

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The Constitution Community is a partnership between classroom teachers and education specialists from the National Archives and Records Administration. We are developing lessons and activities that address constitutional issues, correlate to national academic standards, and encourage the analysis of primary source documents. The lessons that have been developed are arranged according to historical era.

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The War in Vietnam: A Story in Photographs

Constitutional Connection

This lesson relates to Article I, Section 8 , which grants Congress powers to raise and support armies and make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.

This lesson correlates to the National History Standards.

Era 9 -Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)

- **Standard 2C** -Demonstrate understanding of the foreign and domestic consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

Standard IV.B.1. -Explain the principal foreign policy positions of the United States and evaluate their consequences.

Cross-curricular Connections

Share this lesson with your history, language arts, and journalism colleagues.

List of Documents

1. Marines riding atop an M-48 tank, covering their ears, April 3, 1968.

2. Operation "Yellowstone" Vietnam. Following a hard day, a few members of Company A gather around a guitar and play a few songs, January 18, 1968.

3. Operation "Oregon," a search and destroy mission conducted by infantry platoon of Troop B. An infantryman is lowered into a tunnel by members of the reconnaissance platoon, April 24, 1967.

4. A sky trooper from the 1st Cavalry Division keeps track of the time he has left on his "short time" helmet, 1968.

5. Soldiers carry a wounded comrade through a swampy area, 1969.

6. Marines of Company H walk through a punji-staked gully, January 28, 1966.

7. Wet going - A Marine keeps a battery pack dry as he wades through a muddy hole while on a search mission.

8. A Marine stands watch in an observation tower as a chaplain holds mass on Hill 950, July 31, 1967.

9. "Home is where you dig" was the sign over a fighting bunker, 1968.

10. Members of U.S. Navy SEAL Team One move down Bassac River in a SEAL Team assault boat, November 19, 1967.

11. Loretta Clause plays cards, talks, etc. with Marines. She is a volunteer worker for the Red Cross, August 2, 1967.

12. Navy nurses check the medical chart of a Marine corporal aboard the hospital ship USS Repose of South Vietnam, April 22, 1966.

13. A nurse tends to a patient just out of surgery in the intensive care ward of the hospital ship USS Repose, October, 1967.

Historical Background

The war in Vietnam has been described as the war America watched from their living rooms. Images of combat and American GIs were projected through our TV screens and across our newspapers daily. During the war in Vietnam, the American military gave the press unprecedented freedom of access to combat zones. This allowed newspaper reporters and photographers and television crews to document a war involving American sons and daughters on the other side of the world. This willingness to allow documentation of the war was also extended to the military's own photographers. Between 1962 and 1975, military photographers for the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force took millions of photographs of the American conflict in Vietnam. Almost a quarter of a million of these images are now located at the National Archives. These photographs serve publishers, historians, and students who want to learn more about Vietnam. They include images of almost every aspect of the war.

The jobs of the military photographers were not only to document the war, but also to capture images for the historical record. One photographer, Chuck Cook, describes it as follows: "What the photographers did was worth doing--maybe not for the reasons the military said. They just felt that what the soldiers were going through was worth saving." In his book *Vietnam: Images from Combat Photographers* , author C. Douglas Elliott describes the images that came in from the combat operation as ones "that did not show winners and losers. They showed soldiers--often teenagers--coping as best they could with unrelenting heat and humidity, heavy packs, heavy guns, and an invisible enemy whose mines, booby traps, and snipers could cut life short without a moment's warning." In order to capture these images, photographers took many risks and suffered many of the same hardships as the soldiers and personnel they were covering.

The operations and direction of the military photography was organized by the Army Pictorial Center (APC), which dispatched a series of teams for brief visits. These teams were organized into DASPO (Department of the Army Special Photo Office). DASPO rotated photographers into Vietnam for three-month tours of duty from a base in Hawaii. It wasn't long before the Marines sent their own photographers into the field, quickly followed by the Army and its 221st Signal Company. The DASPO and the 221st were considered the Army's elite photographic units. Smaller numbers of photographers worked for the Public Information Office (PIO), the Air Force and the Navy. The Air Force photographers assisted in aerial reconnaissance and documentation of bombing missions. The Navy photographers worked from the Combat Camera Group-Pacific (CCGPAC) photographing river patrols, counterguerrilla missions, and SEAL teams. The mission of DASPO was to provide a historical record of the war for the Pentagon archives. These photographers were not there as journalists, but rather to create a visual record of operations, equipment, and personnel. After the photographs were processed by the Pentagon, they were made available to military publications, the press, and the public at a photographic library at the Pentagon.

As these photographers worked to document the war, they covered a variety of people and circumstances including combat missions, GIs, support personnel, medical units, and visits by dignitaries, politicians, and entertainers. While they may have been there to provide visual record of operations, equipment, and personnel; their photographs also tell a story. It is a story about the young men and women who fulfilled served their duty to their country by serving in the war in Vietnam.

Resources

Andrews, Owen, C. Douglas Elliott, and Laurence I. Levin. *Vietnam: Images from Combat Photographers* . Washington, DC: Starwood Publishing, Inc., 1991.

Arnold, James R. *The Illustrated History of Rangers: The Vietnam War* . New York: Bantam Books, Rufus Publications, Inc., 1988.

Devanter, Lynda Van. *Home Before Morning: The Story of an Army Nurse in Vietnam* . New York: Warner Books, 1983.

Guilmartin, John, Jr., and Michael O'Leary. *The Illustrated History of Helicopters: The Vietnam War* . New York: Bantam Books, Rufus Publications, Inc.,1988.

Simmons, Edwin H. *The Illustrated History of Marines: The Vietnam War* . New York: Bantam Books, Rufus Publications, Inc., 1987.

Teaching Activities

Photograph Analysis

1. Make a transparency or distribute copies of Document 1 (Marines riding on an M-48 tank). Ask the students to study the photograph for 2 minutes. Then ask them to create a chart listing the people, objects, and actions in the photograph. Ask students to share with the class what they saw in the photograph. Direct students to answer the following questions:

a. What can you infer from the photograph?
b. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?
c. Where might you be able to find answers to your questions?
d. How might you categorize this photograph? (Try to lead students to a category/topic they would be able to research relating to the war in Vietnam, such as battle tactics, weapons, tanks, or jungle warfare.)
e. Create a caption for the photograph.

2. Divide students into small groups and distribute one of the featured photographs to each group. The photographs can be printed from the digitized image, or they can be downloaded onto a disk and each group can work from the image on their computers. If your classroom has the advantage of the Internet, students can locate their photograph through the NAIL Database [http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html] by using the control number listed below for the assigned photograph. Ask each group to analyze their photograph as they did in Activity 1. Each group should categorize the photograph as a topic that will be easy to research and generate 2 to 3 questions from the photograph. Topics might include land warfare, air warfare, Marines in Vietnam, and roles of women serving in Vietnam.
Control numbers include:
NWDNS-127-N-A371493
NWDNS-111-C-CC45804
NWDNS-111-C-CC39781
NWDNS-111-SC-647323
NWDNS-111-SC-651408
NWDNS-127-N-A186578
NWDNS-127-N-A193157
NWDNS-127-N-A193262
NWDNS-N-A371411
NWDNS-428-K-42782
NWDNS-127-N-A370335

NWDNS-127-N-A704374
NWDNS--428-N-1142176

Research and Present

3. Using the questions generated from the photograph and the category they defined in Activity 2, instruct groups to conduct research in order to answer their questions and obtain information about the war in Vietnam relating to their category. Next, ask each group to create a presentation about their photograph and general topic. The format for each presentation should include a display of the photograph, an overview of the research they completed on their topic, and a reading of a caption they created for their photograph that was based on their research. Encourage students to be creative! Following the presentations, lead a class discussion on the foreign and domestic consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Creative Writing

4. Direct students to take on the role of an exhibit curator who has selected these photographs to create an exhibit that will help people understand the foreign and domestic consequences of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Direct student groups to write an exhibit script (story) that incorporates all of the photographs. Students may then share their scripts and discuss how their exhibits compare or differ.

5. As an independent writing activity, ask students to write a review of one of the other group's exhibits.

The documents included in this project are from Record Group 127, Records of the United States Marine Corps; Record Group 111, Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer; and Record Group 428, General Records of the Department of the Navy. They are available online through the National Archives Information Locator (NAIL) database [http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html], control numbers
NWDNS-127-N-A371493
NWDNS-111-C-CC45804
NWDNS-111-C-CC39781
NWDNS-111-SC-647323
NWDNS-111-SC-651408
NWDNS-127-N-A186578
NWDNS-127-N-A193157
NWDNS-127-N-A193262
NWDNS-N-A371411
NWDNS-428-K-42782
NWDNS-127-N-A370335
NWDNS-127-N-A704374
NWDNS--428-N-1142176. NAIL is a searchable database that contains information about a wide variety of NARA holdings across the country. You can use NAIL to search

record descriptions by keywords or topics and retrieve digital copies of selected textual documents, photographs, maps, and sound recordings related to thousands of topics.

This article was written by Linda Darus Clark, a teacher at Padua Franciscan High School in Parma, Ohio.

Document 1: . Marines riding atop an M-48 tank, covering their ears, April 3, 1968.

Document 2: Operation "Yellowstone" Vietnam. Following a hard day, a few members of Company A gather around a guitar and play a few songs, January 18, 1968.

Document 3: Operation "Oregon," a search and destroy mission conducted by infantry platoon of Troop B. An infantryman is lowered into a tunnel by members of the reconnaissance platoon, April 24, 1967.

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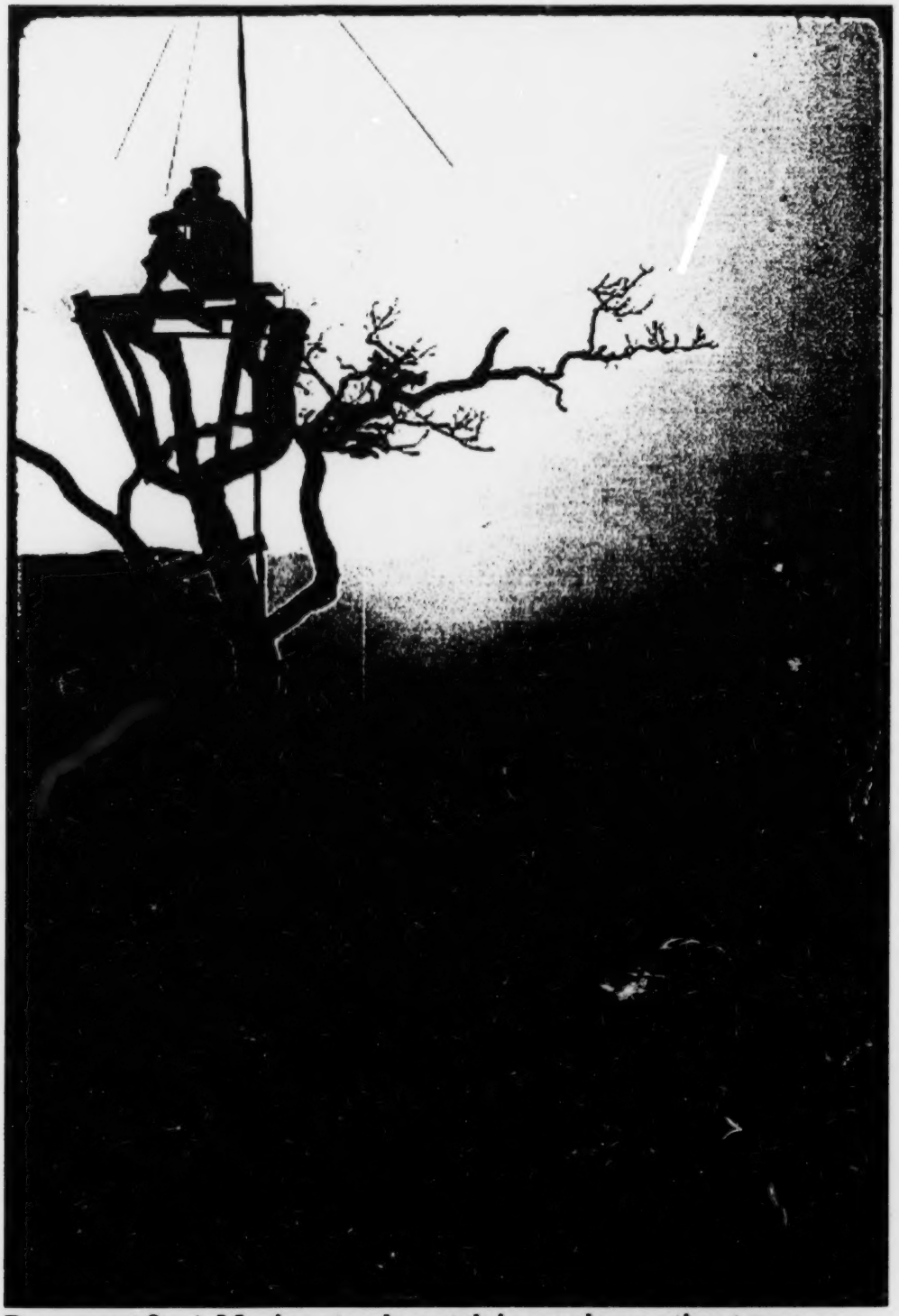
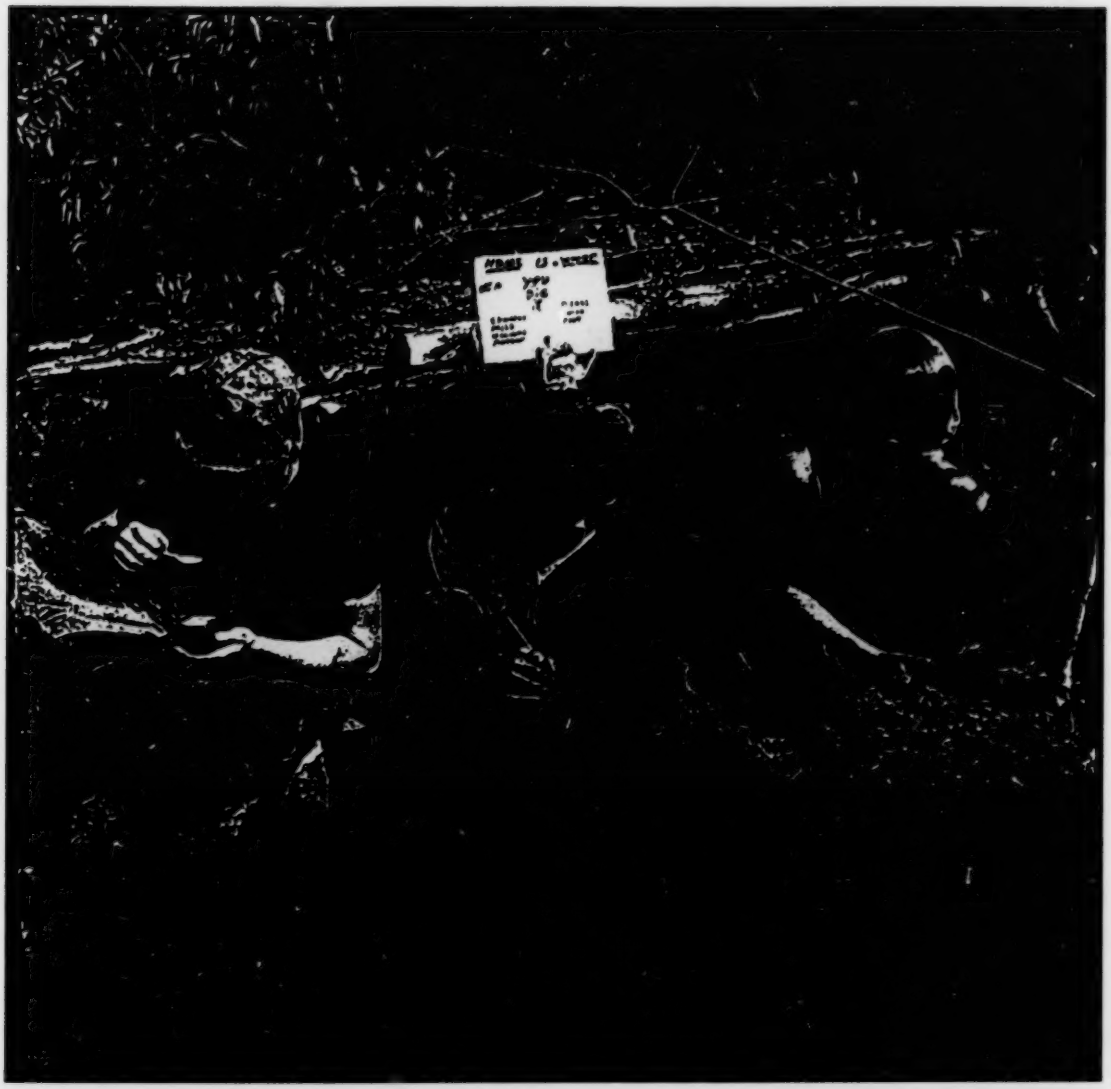
Document 5: Soldiers carry a wounded comrade through a swampy area, 1969.

Document 6: Marines of Company H walk through a punji-staked gully, January 28, 1966.

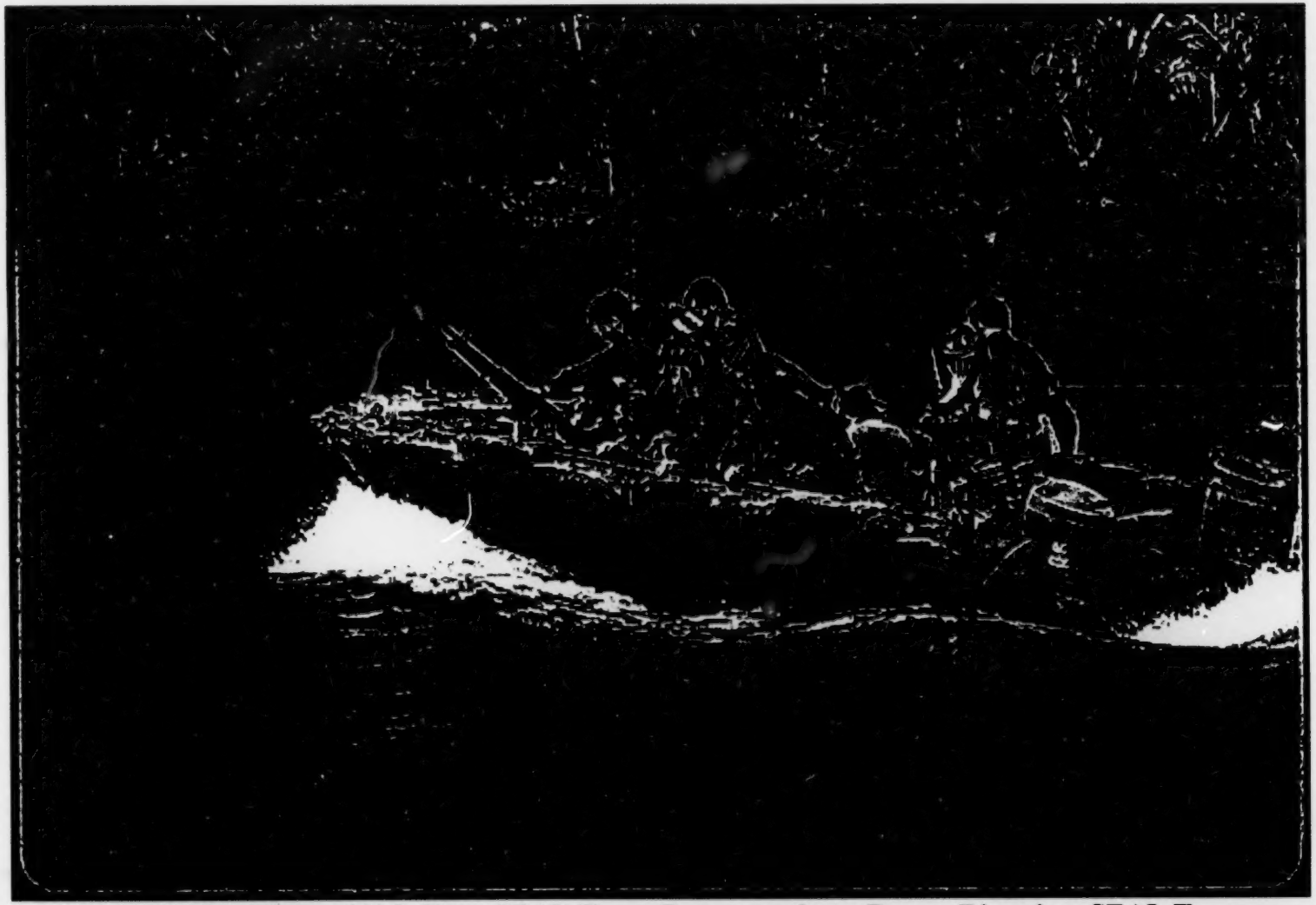
Document 7: Wet going - A Marine keeps a battery pack dry as he wades through a muddy hole while on a search mission.



Document 8: A Marine stands watch in an observation tower as a chaplain holds mass on Hill 950, July 31, 1967.

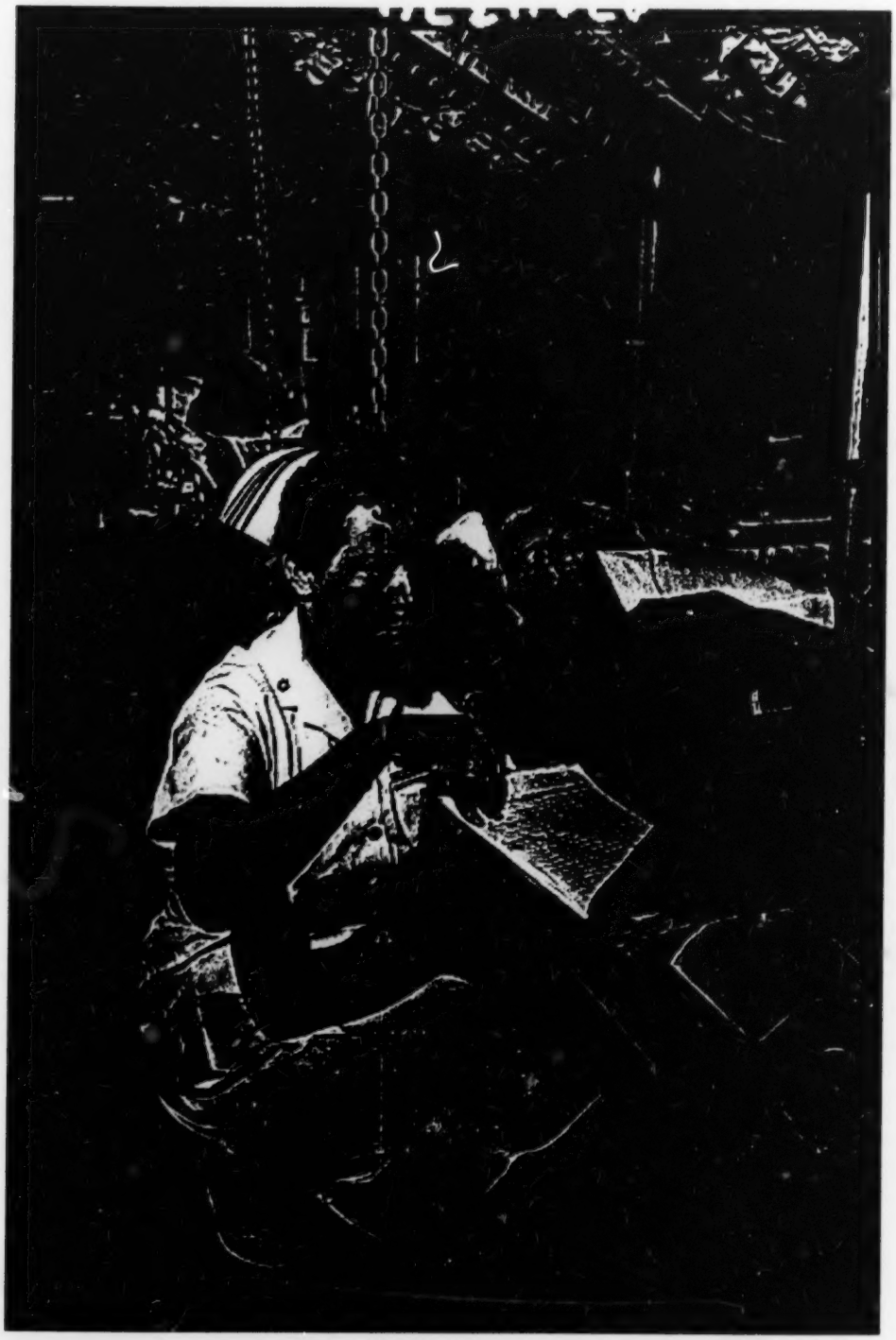


Document 9: "Home is where you dig" was the sign over a fighting bunker, 1968.

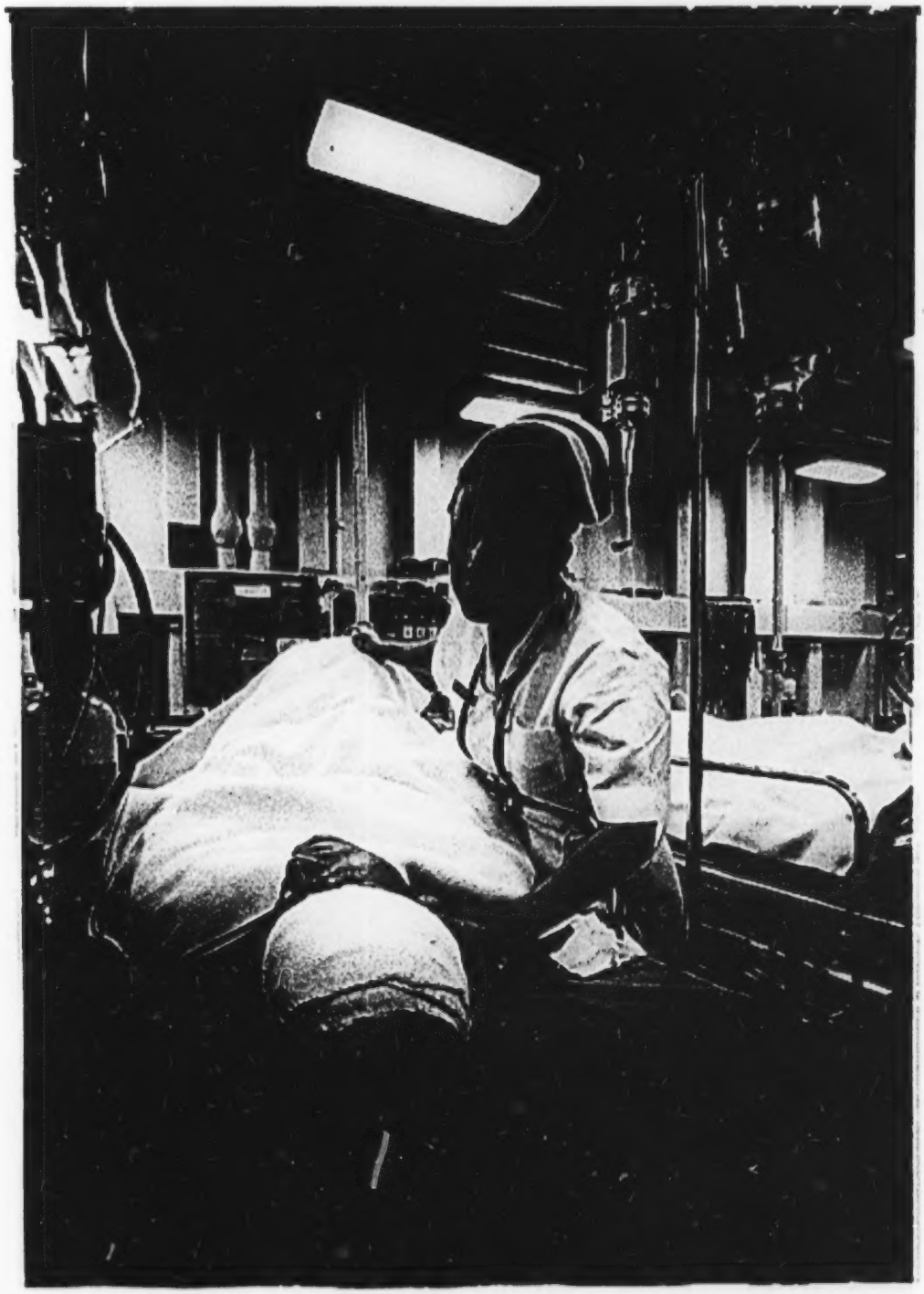


Document 10: Members of U.S. Navy SEAL Team One move down Bassac River in a SEAL Team assault boat, November 19, 1967.

Document 11: Loretta Clause plays cards, talks, etc. with Marines. She is a volunteer worker for the Red Cross, August 2, 1967.



Document 12: Navy nurses check the medical chart of a Marine corporal aboard the hospital ship USS Repose of South Vietnam, April 22, 1966.



Document 13: A nurse tends to a patient just out of surgery in the intensive care ward of the hospital ship USS Repose, October, 1967.